

Old Environmentalism and New Environmentalism

I'm old.

There's no doubt about it.

I'm 71 and I look like I'm 71.

I remember things from decades ago and I puzzle over some of the newer things.

I'm pretty good with technology. That's because I grew up reading science fiction about various imagined futures and I read so much of that sort of stuff that I began to feel as though the times in which I was living: seventies, eighties, nineties, were already somehow the past.

Now we're in the long imagined 21st Century. In some ways disappointing. In other ways the inevitable mixture of utopia, dystopia and environmental problems.

In the 1970s we campaigned to get the governments of the world to give us bicycle lanes, sustainable materials, renewable energy, green technology and housing. An end to lead in petrol and in paint.

In the 80s we continued and also asked for recycling facilities, vegan food and clothing, an end to forced child labour, an end to sweatshops and wage slavery, an end to the extreme reliance on fossil fuels. We asked for the right to buy things in a shop without being forced to accept a plastic carrier bag. An end to the aerosol cans which were punching a hole in the ozone layer.

In the 90s we continued to campaign about all of those and succeeded in small ways with some of them. We were beginning to get somewhere and things were beginning to change. But too slowly.

In the 21st Century a lot has changed. Recycling is offered by local government as standard in the U.K., E.U., U.S. and many countries. Electric cars are taken seriously. Veganism, bicycle lanes, house insulation, renewables, rechargeables, sustainability - all taken seriously.

We've come a long way but still we need to do more.

Nevertheless, the activities of some campaigners really worry me.

What the hell use is throwing soup over Van Gogh's paintings?

I admit that, being old, I may have become too old to understand the so called "Extinction Rebellion".

Are they really environmental campaigners? Are they the newer version of our old green campaigns back in the 90s?

Or are they greenwashed social trouble makers?

I admit to being unsure about the validity of current campaigns. Maybe it's my age or maybe something really has gone wrong.

I remember arguing in my local Friends of the Earth group in Exeter in the 1990s that we should support and take part in a proposed Critical Mass which would've consisted of a lot of people on bicycles gathering in a road and creating an obstruction to stop the flow of polluting petrol car traffic. The chap chairing the meeting, Maurice Spurway, objected to the idea because he felt that bicycles doing Critical Mass just wasn't "nice". Maurice had a sort of power over other people who came to the meetings and they pretty much always deferred to him. I couldn't help noticing that he was a car driver.

But bicycles blocking a road was a very small thing. Police would quickly clear them out of the way and issue a few cautions. The point would be made and would get in the papers. Perhaps it would make people think.

Some of the actions being taken these days by the group called **Extinction Rebellion** are far more questionable. I get that there is a feeling of existential panic that everyone's grandchildren will be living in a nightmare situation of world disorder but, let's face it, a nightmare situation of world disorder is going to happen anyway just because of everyone having too many grandchildren.

Overpopulation is the root of all these issues.

Overpopulation causes more crime.

Overpopulation causes more pollution.

Overpopulation causes more wars and bigger ones.

Overpopulation causes more animal extinctions.

Overpopulation causes more homelessness.

Overpopulation causes more epidemics of disease.

Overpopulation causes more mental and physical stress and, consequently, more mental and physical illness.

There's not a single bad thing in the world which isn't either caused by overpopulation or made worse by overpopulation.

There are currently more than eight billion people in the world. One billion people could live comfortably and sustainably with existing resources.

Eight billion will quickly become nine billion and will, even more quickly, become ten. The rate will accelerate until the whole world is just one big crowd of people fighting over meagre resources of food and shelter.

The People's Republic of China did a very good thing in limiting families to a maximum of two children. Western propaganda tried to make it seem like a bad thing and that same propaganda is still trying to make it seem as if any reduction in population is somehow a bad thing.

We need people to decide to not be parents, or to decide to adopt, or people to choose lifestyles without parenthood. We need more gay people. We need legal abortion in every country on Earth. The anti-abortionists call themselves "pro life" but will end up making human life on Earth impossible.

If you want to help solve the problems on the Planet Earth do this: campaign to decrease childbirth.